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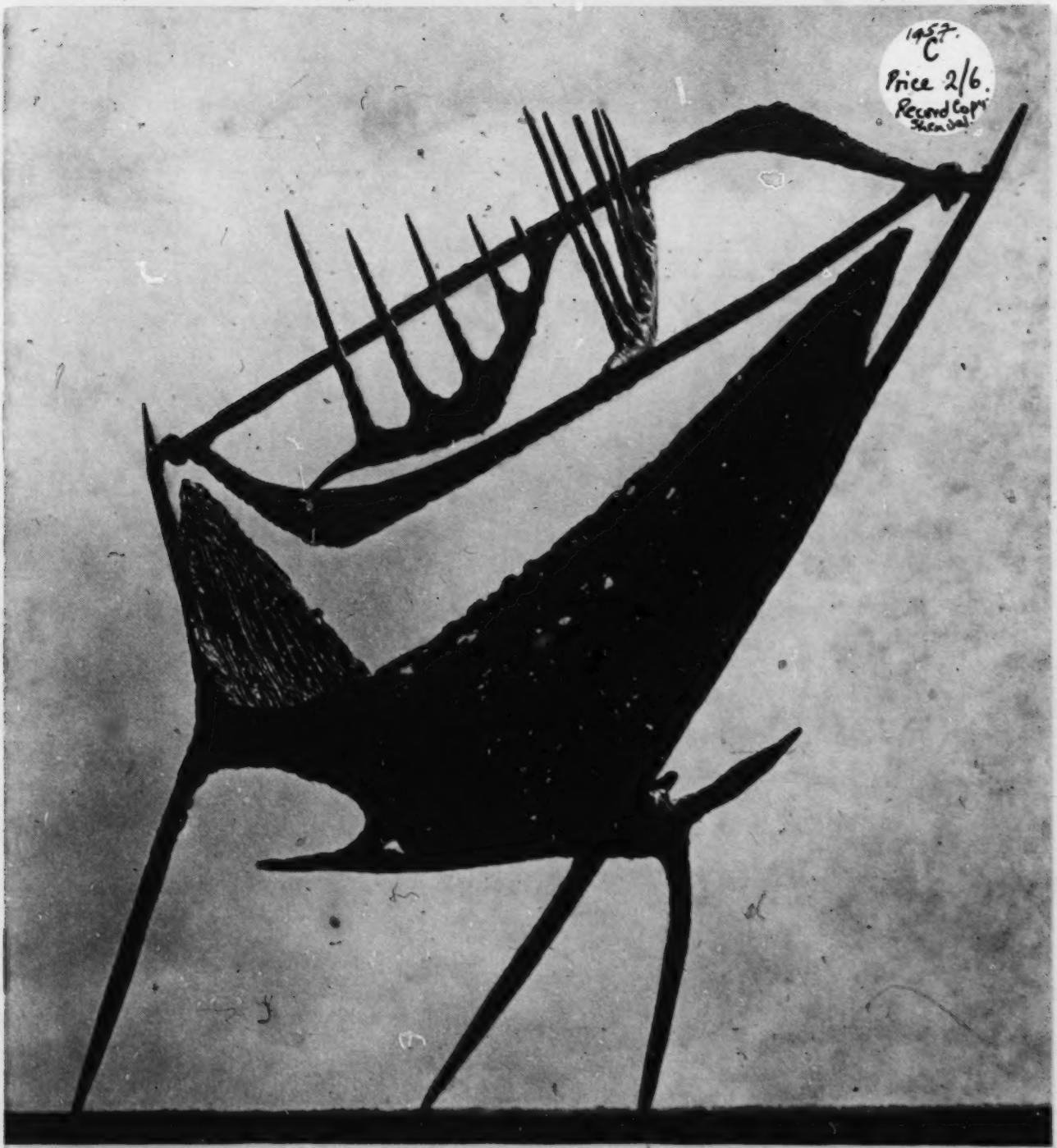


Lynn Chadwick

1957

Cover Balanced Sculpture 1952, 12¾ ins. No. 3

Foreword

The appreciation of sculpture and the interest shown in it by the general public have advanced notably during recent years. This is no doubt partly due to the exhibitions of sculpture in the open air arranged by the London County Council and partly to the wide recognition now given to the school of contemporary British sculptors. One reflection of the fact that we have a valuable export of talent is seen in the prizes won by British sculptors in international competitions during recent years. The latest of these successes was Mr Lynn Chadwick's award of the international sculpture prize at the Venice Biennale last year. The greater part of the present exhibition was shown at the British Pavilion in Venice, and, with additional pieces, has since been seen in Vienna, Munich, Paris, Amsterdam and Brussels. We welcome this opportunity of rounding off the continental tour by showing the exhibition in London. We are acutely aware that this has meant yet a further request to owners to extend their loans and express our sincere gratitude for this generosity which has deprived both the original owners and those who bought works in Venice alike for a whole year. We are also much indebted for their considerable help to the Fine Arts Department of the British Council who assembled the exhibition and under whose auspices it has been shown in Europe, and to Mr Robert Melville for permission to reprint the introduction which he wrote for the original catalogue.

P.J.

Introduction

Lynn Chadwick made his first experiments in sculpture after serving as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm, and appropriately enough his earliest works were suspended constructions, dedicated to Calder's 'idea of detached bodies, of different sizes and densities, floating in space'. He did not, however, share Calder's rather oriental vision of quietistic galaxies, and preferred to engineer jerky, unpredictable and alarming movements which give his most characteristic mobiles an air of turbulence.

The mobiles were followed by standing metal constructions which he called 'balanced sculptures', and some of them were to be seen in Venice in 1952, when works by eight young sculptors were exhibited in the British Pavilion. These bow-legged, ponderous structures, armed to excess against aggression, make an eloquent contribution to what Sir Herbert Read, describing the prevailing imagery of our young sculptors, has called the 'Geometry of Fear'. They are conceived as object-beings. They contain suspended, sharp-toothed inner structures which swing or revolve when disturbed, and seem more likely to injure the object-being itself than its hypothetical antagonists. This mobile component is a nightmarish symbol of the last flicker of nimbleness in a creature which has lost the power to advance or retreat under the compulsion to make Kafka-like preparations against attack. Sometimes the construction contains a parasitical gob of coloured glass, and the effect of this dramatic juxtaposition of substances—the one opaque, the other filled with light—is to increase the construction's awareness of danger and capacity for fear, for the gob of glass seems to operate as an organ of sense.

All the same, Chadwick's striking contributions to the art of predicament do not arise from oppressive personal anxieties, and he would be very far from endorsing Kafka's contention that the artist is smaller and weaker than the average man. He is at home in the world, his aspirations do not outrun his resources, and, like every considerable artist of our time, he is careful to give automatism its due.

At the close of the period of balanced sculptures, he made some linear constructions in iron, without mobile components. They prepared the way for the complex armatures of the solid figures which, for the last three years, have engaged all his sculptural resources, bringing into play the techniques of modelling, carving and open construction.

The armatures, or skeletons, of his solid sculpture are elaborate multiplications of tetrahedral cages made from mild steel rod, and look like three-dimensional versions of anamorphic studies in linear perspective. He fills the cages with a compound of gypsum and iron filings (used in industry for the bases of heavy machinery), and before the substance becomes glass-hard, files and chisels the modelled surfaces down to the outer grid of the armature.

Like many contemporary sculptors, and like the sculptor of the 'Venus' of Willendorf, Chadwick is preoccupied by the torso. Heads and limbs tend to become vestigial appendages, but the chimeras and 'personages' revealed by Chadwick's inventive attritions are characterized by an arrogance of well-being which reflects the soundness of their construction.

ROBERT MELVILLE

Catalogue

1 BALANCED SCULPTURE 1951, iron, height 8½ ins.
Collection: Michael Middleton, Esq.

2 THE INNER EYE 1952, iron and glass, height 90 ins. Plate 1
Collection: The Museum of Modern Art, New York

3 BALANCED SCULPTURE 1952, iron, height 12¾ ins.
Reproduced on cover
Collection: National Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

4 IDIOMORPHIC BEAST 1953, iron, height 32 ins.
Collection: The City Art Gallery, Bristol

5 SCULPTURE 1953, iron, height 20 ins.
Collection: Mrs H. D. Molesworth

6 Maquette for THE STRANGER 1954, iron and silver, height 21 ins. Collection: La Baronne Lambert, Brussels

7 THE STRANGER 1954, iron and composition, height 29 ins.
Collection: Mrs J. B. Metzenberg, Chicago

8 ENCOUNTER 1955, iron and composition, height 27 ins. Plate 4
Collection: Mr and Mrs Romie Shapiro, New York

9 ROCK 1955, iron and composition, height 24½ ins.
Collection: Mr and Mrs Harry K. Winston, Michigan

10 TWO DANCING FIGURES II, 1955, iron and composition, height 72 ins. Plate 3
Collection: Dr W. A. Bechtler, Zürich ✓

11 TWO DANCING FIGURES VI, 1955, iron and composition, height 22½ ins. Plate 2
Collection: Mr Albert L. Arenberg, Chicago

12 TWO FIGURES 1955, iron and composition, height 66½ ins.
Collection: Art Institute of Chicago (gift of the Claire and Albert Arenberg Fund)

13 TEDDY BOY AND GIRL 1956, iron and composition, height 75 ins. Private collection, New York

14 BEAST I 1955, iron and composition, height 15½, length 34½ ins.
Collection: E. and A. Silberman Galleries Inc., New York

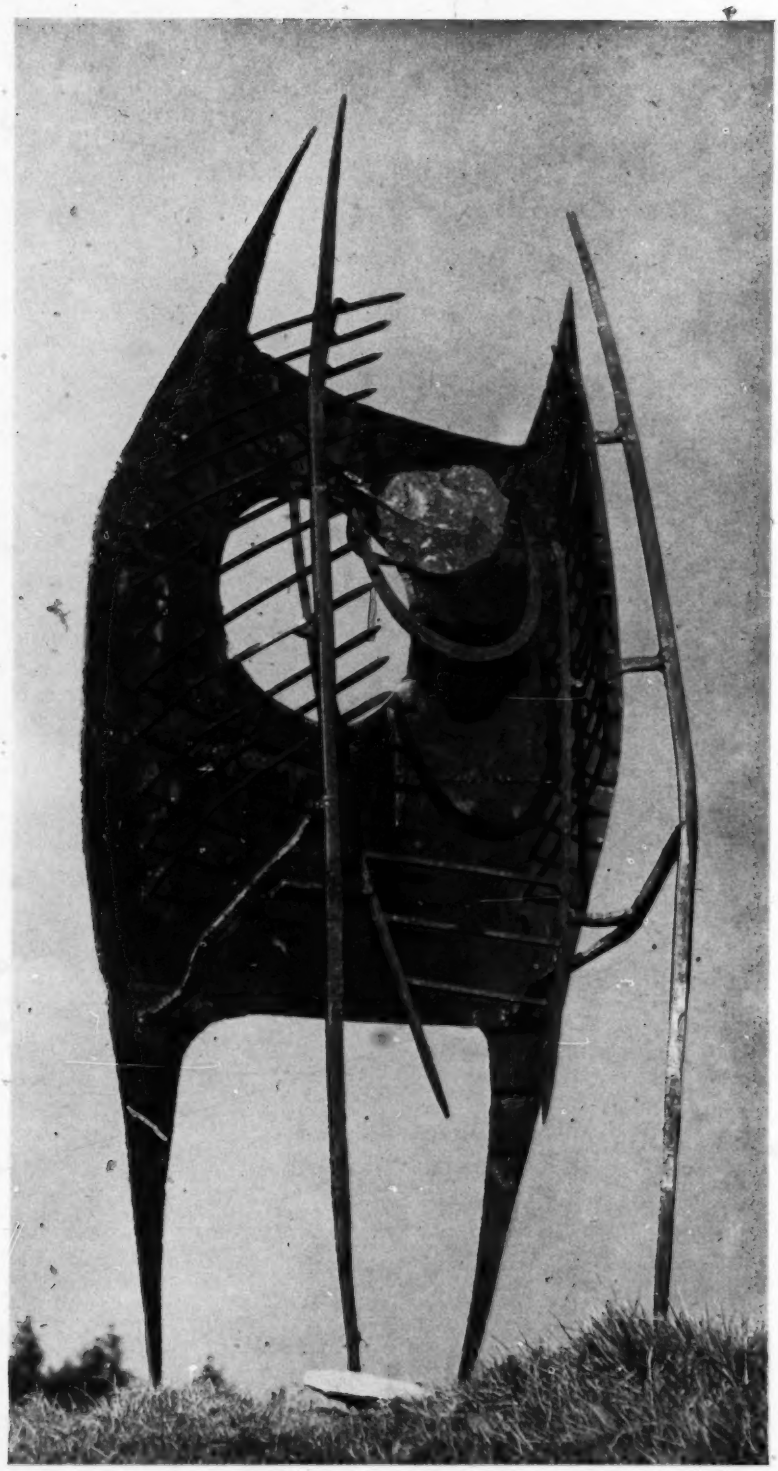


Plate 1 The Inner Eye 1952, 90 ins. No. 2

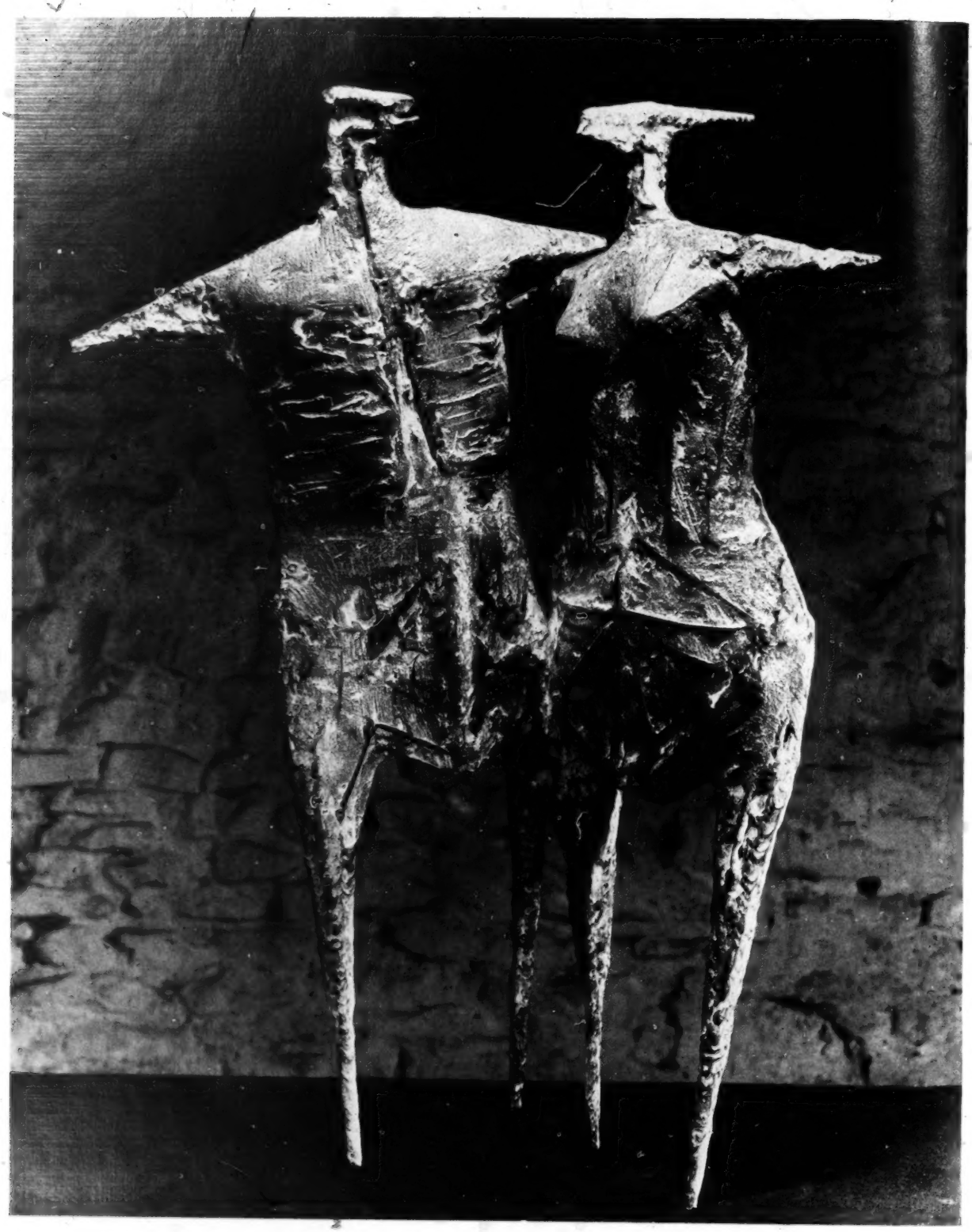


Plate 2 Two Dancing Figures VI 1955, 22½ ins. No. 11

Plate 5 Two Dancing Figures II 1955, 72 ins. No. 10

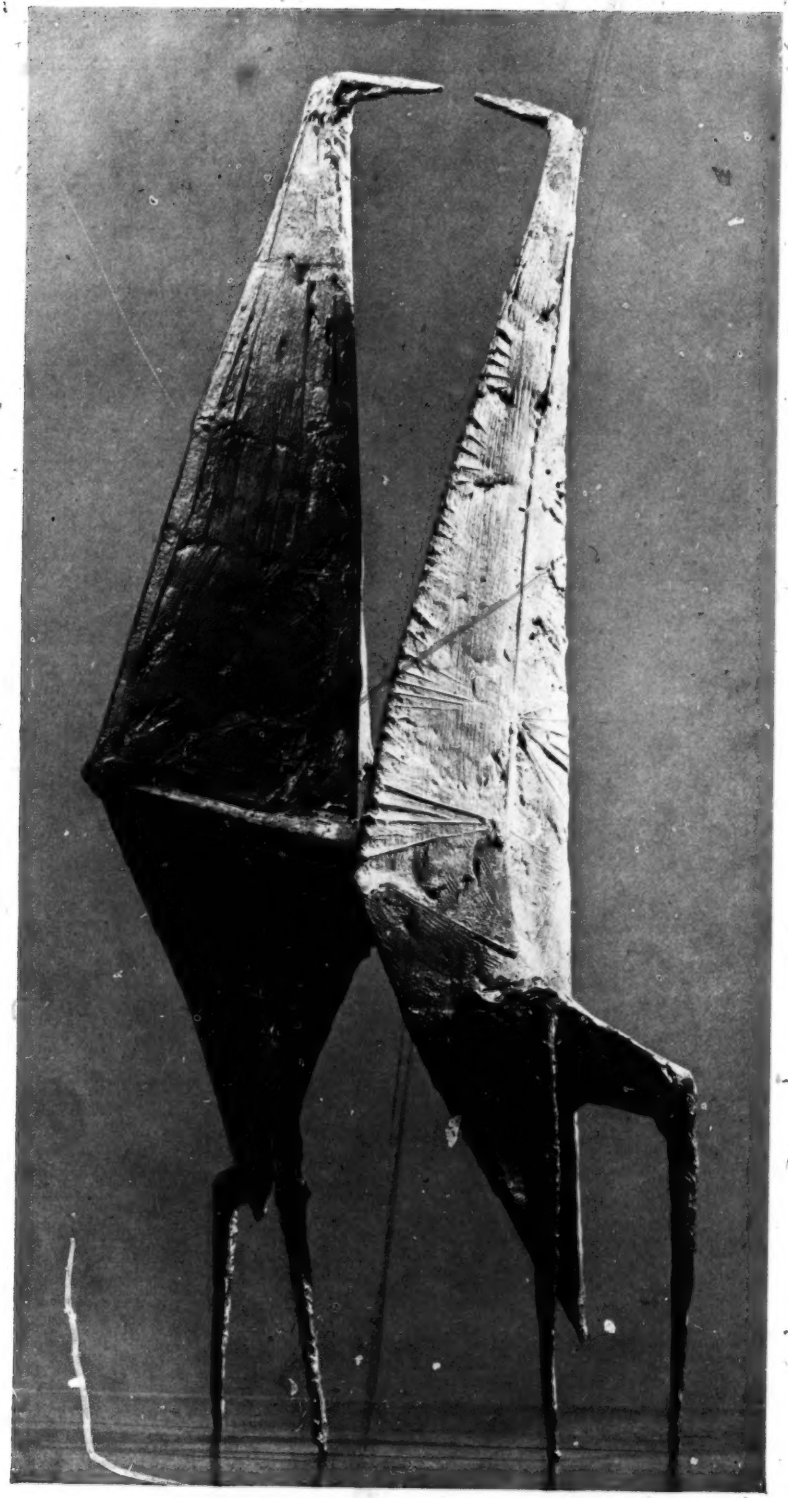
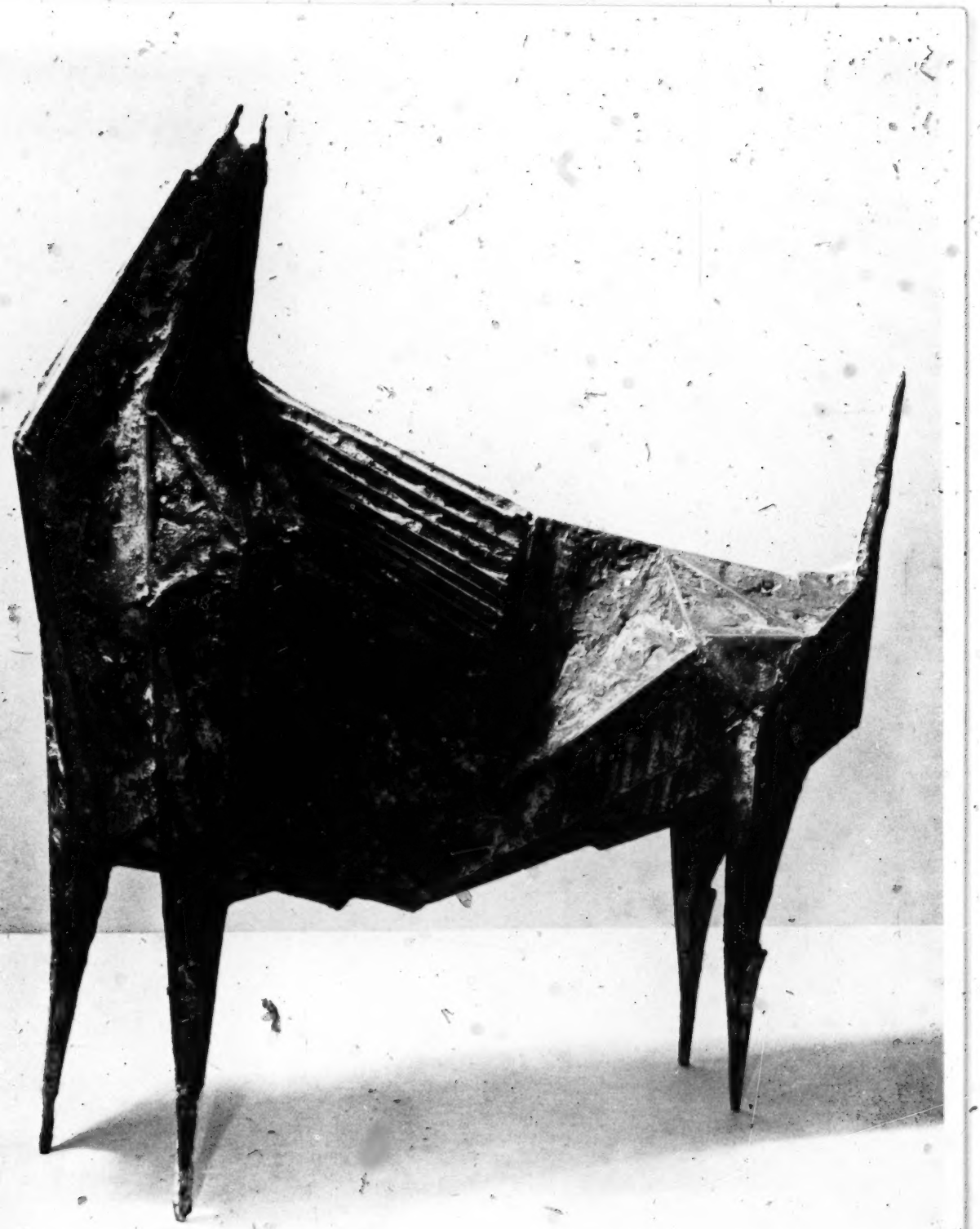


Plate 4 Encounter 1955, 27 ins. No. 8



e 5 Beast IX 1956, 57½ ins. No. 22

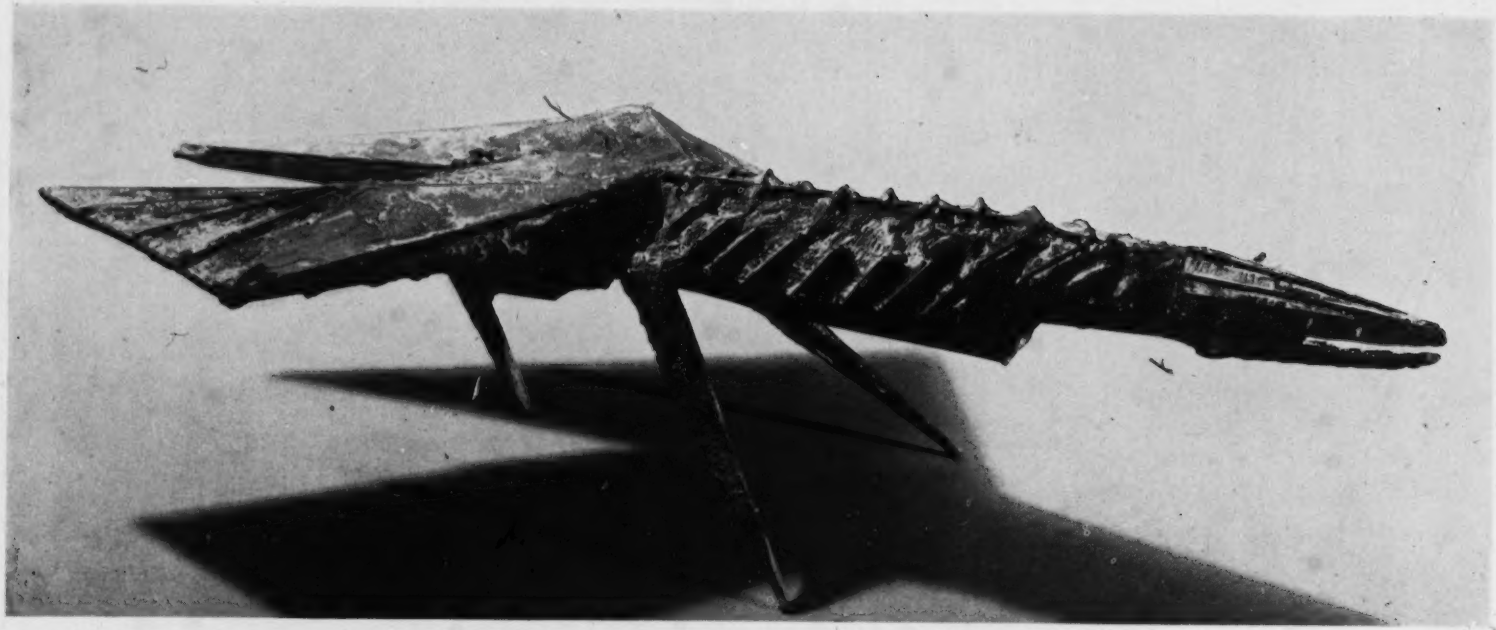


Plate 6 Bird 1956, length 27½ ins. No. 24

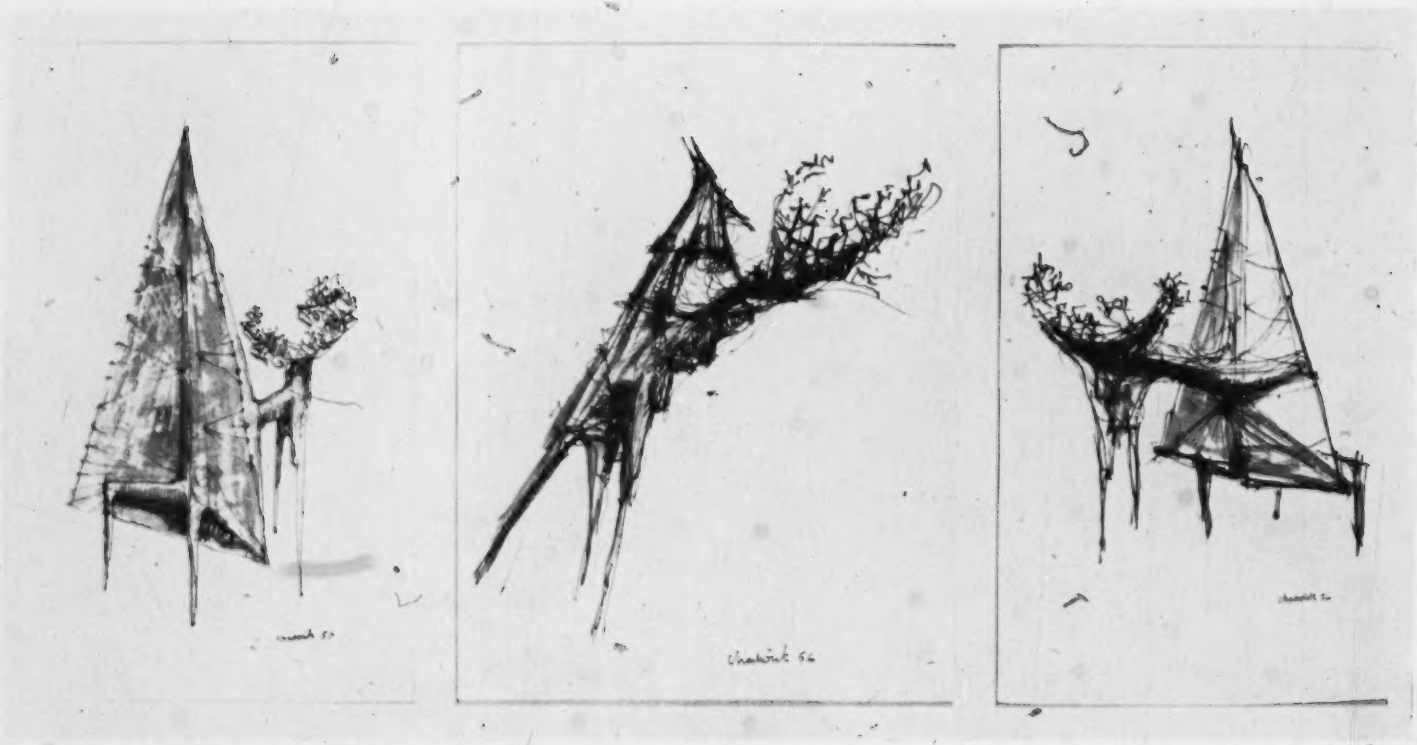


Plate 7 Three studies for The Seasons

Plate 8 The Seasons 1956, 69½ ins. No. 15

15 THE SEASONS 1956, iron and composition, height 69½ ins. Plate 8
Collection: Mr Morton D. May, St Louis

16 Maquette for TEDDY BOY AND GIRL 1956, iron and composition, height 17¼ ins.
Collection: Museum Boymans, Rotterdam

17 BOY AND GIRL 1956, iron and composition, height 17¾ ins.
Collection: the artist

18 ORATOR 1956, iron and composition, height 22 ins.
Collection: M. Henri Samuel, Paris

19 DISSENSION 1956, iron and composition, height 25¾ ins.
Collection: Baron Philippe de Rothschild, Paris

20 BEAST VIII 1956, iron and composition, length 40½ ins.
Collection: Dr W. A. Bechtler, Zürich

21 WINGED FIGURES 1956, iron and composition, height 90½ ins. Collection: Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts de Belgique

22 BEAST IX 1956, iron and composition, height 37½ ins. Plate 5
Collection: the artist

23 Maquette for WINGED FIGURES II 1956, iron and composition, height 16¾ ins. Private collection, Paris

24 BIRD 1956, iron and composition, length 27½ ins. Plate 6
Collection: the artist

25 ENCOUNTER IV 1956, iron and composition, height 26¼ ins.
Collection: the artist

26 WIGWAM 1956, iron and composition, height 51 ins.
Collection: Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris

27–55 Drawings for sculpture 1952-1956, pen and wash, from the collections of Sir George Peter Labouchere, K.C.M.G., Mr H. C. Bechtler, Zürich, Dr W. A. Bechtler, Zürich, Dr Winterstein, Munich, the Staatsliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich, and the artist

Biographical Note

Born in London in 1914 and educated at the Merchant Taylors School. Trained in an architect's office and served as a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm from 1941 to 1944.

1947 Experiments with mobiles.
Goes to live at Upper Coberley in the Cotswolds where he has lived ever since.

1950 First one-man exhibition at Gimpel Fils Gallery.

1951 Prizewinner in *Unknown Political Prisoner* competition.
Exhibits in open-air exhibition, Battersea Park, London.
Three works commissioned in connection with the Festival of Britain.

1952 Second one-man exhibition at Gimpel Fils Gallery.
Exhibits with other young sculptors at British Pavilion, 26th Venice Biennale.

1953 Exhibits in International open-air exhibition, Middleheim Park, Antwerp.

1954 Exhibits in open-air exhibition, Holland Park, London.

1955 Work included in exhibitions organized by the British Council for the U.S.A. and Canada and for Germany.
Represented in New Decade exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Work included in Eisenplastik exhibition at the Kunsthalle, Berne.

1956 Work included in international sculpture exhibition Musée Rodin, Paris.

Awarded International Sculpture Prize at 28th Venice Biennale.

Retrospective exhibition of work in British Pavilion, afterwards shown in Vienna, Munich, Paris, Amsterdam and Brussels.

Work included in exhibition of recent British Sculpture organized by the British Council and shown in Sweden.

1957 First one-man exhibition in New York at the Saidenberg Gallery.

Exhibits in open-air exhibition at Holland Park.

Sculpture acquired by many public collections including Victoria and Albert Museum; the Tate Gallery; City Art Gallery, Bristol; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris; Museum Boymans, Rotterdam; Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts de Belgique; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Art Institute of Chicago; Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo; Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, and the National Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

* VENICE BIENNALE 1956 British Pavilion, June 16–October 21
* VIENNA Wiener Secession, November 10–November 30
* MUNICH Lenbach Gallery, December 15–January 26, 1957
* PARIS Musée National d'Art Moderne, February 9–March 10
* AMSTERDAM Stedelijk Museum, March 29–May 6

BRUSSELS Palais des Beaux Arts, May 18–June 16

LONDON Arts Council Gallery, July 5–August 10

* With Ivon Hitchens Exhibition

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